

"How Close?

Scripture: Exodus 34:5-8

(Illustration of boy in church and "God not there?")

After attending church with his father one Sunday morning, before getting into bed that evening a little boy kneeled at his bedside and prayed, "Dear God, we had a good time at church today, but I wish You had been there."

Now unlike that little boy, the Israelites, definitely Moses in particular knew that God was in their midst. Moses was up on the Mount for the second time with two new stones prepared for God to engrave the Law on them. When Moses ascended the Mount we read, "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." verse 5.

God appeared to Him in the cloud and spoke to Moses from that cloud and we read of His presence, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in ~~mercy~~ goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation.'" verses 6-7.

First God identifies Himself as, "He that is who He is, which is what that phrase, "The Lord, the Lord God," literally means in English. God is therefore identifying Himself as the Great I Am. After God does this, He then spells out what He does for mankind. This statement lets Moses know that even though he and the people of Israel are miserable sinners in the sight of God, yet, God will and does forgive and has that covenant relationship with them.

What was the reaction of Moses? The 8th verse tells us, "And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped," verse 8.

Moses was so close to God and he knew that to be in that position required worship to Him. At this point in time, Moses didn't ask anything of God. He was in His presence and that alone was worthy of worship. Moses had been through all of the experiences of talking to God and getting instructions to lead the people of Israel. But now, God revealed Himself through His name. Just the very name of God should inspire us to bow before Him. The Lord God is He that is who He is. Men have tried to convey thoughts of worship and reverence, but not too many seem to hit the true idea of worship. Frederick W. Faber is perhaps an exception to that rule. You may or may not know that it was he who wrote the words for "Faith of Our Fathers." But two of his writings, (not in most hymnals), speak of the worship of God. Listen to how he phrases this:

How wonderful, how beautiful
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power
And awful purity.
O how I fear Thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope
And penitential tears.

And he also wrote:

Only to sit and think of God,
Oh, what joy it is!
To think the thought, to breathe the Name,
Earth has no higher bliss!

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH - SAGAMORE, PA. - 8/14/94
PRELUDE
GREETINGS/JCYS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRAYER REQUESTS
DURING MY ABSENCE THE NEXT THREE SUNDAYS, GEORGE CANNON
WILL BE FILLING IN FOR ME

*HYMN
RESPONSIVE SCRIPTURE
PRAYER/OFFERING
*DOXOLOGY
PASTORAL PRAYER
HYMN
SCRIPTURE: EXODUS 34:1-8
SERMON: "HOW CLOSE?" - ST. PAUL'S, BUTLER 6/24/90
*HYMN
*BENEDICTION
*POSTLUDE

Erin
Sandy
Diane
VBS Children
Grace
Carl

the littl in od)
the littl in od) I am y, I am y and bin ther
vs -
vs (-2-ht) THAT IS WHO I IS - THE GREAT I AM
vs 2
Fr. rick M. Faber - wrot Faith of Our Fathers
BUT WONDREUL, HOW BUTIFUL TH/SITE OF THEE NUSE
THEE ENOLEZ WISDOM, EXCELT POWR A AWEFUL PURITY.
OH HOW I FEAR THEE, LIVING GOD,
DEEPS, TENDERESS FEARS, & WORSHIP THEE //TREMBLING HOPE
& PENITENTIAL TEARS.
ALWY: ONLY 2 SIT & THINK OF GOD, OH, WHAT JOY IT IS!
THINK TH/THOT, Breathe th/NAME, EARTH HAS NO HIGHER BLIS!
FATHER OF JS, LUV'S REWARD, WHAT PRAISE WIL IT B,
PHOTPAT BA THY THROU 2LY
& GAZE, & GAZ ON THEE.

IF UR CAP STARTS ONG LVRY 3TRY, IS IT RELIABL?
IF UR PAPECY SKIMP DELIVRY EVRY MON & THURS, IS HE TRUSTWORTHY?
IF U LONT GO 2 WORK ONE OR TWIC A MNT, R U A LOYAL EMPLOYEE?
IF UR REFRIG STOPS WORK 4A DAY OR 2 EVRY NOW & THEN, DO U SAY,
OH, WELL IT WORKS MOST OF TH/THOT?
IF UR WATH HEATR PROVIES U W/AN ICY SHOWR EVRY NOW & THEN, IF IT
DEPENDEL?
IF U KIS A COUPL OF LOAN PAYMENS EVRY YR, DUEZ TH BANK SAY, 10 OUT
OF 12 ISNT BAD?
IF U FAIL 2 WORK 1 OR TWO SUNDYS A MNT, WUD U EXPEC PB CALLED
A FAITHFUL XPIAN?
WE EXPEC FAITHFULNESS & RELIABILITY EX FR/THINGS & OTHR PRO
DUE NOT G EXPEC TH/SAM FR/US?
1/PFGC IS THAT IN OUR RELIG ACTIVITYS WE C OURESELVC AS VOLUN-
TEERS RATHER THAN AS DUTY BND.
FOR A VOLUNTEER, ALMOS ANYTH SEEMS ACCEPTBL.
FOR A BONDSEERV WHO IS DUTY BND, FAITHFULNESS IS EXPECTED.

(Illus preache Francois Fenelon - King Louis XIV of France)
in 17th centry Francois Fenelon was cort preache-R Louis XIV
K arry, no one ther but preache
K Louis demand: WHAT DUV THIS MEANT?
Fenelon reply - I HAD PUBLISH THAT U WUD NOT CUM 2 CH 2DAY,
IN CHD OF THAT UD MAJ MITT C WHO SERV'S G IN TRUTH & WHO FLATTERS
TH/KING.

How wort - detrm how serv
worsh no sub 4servicinr is servic sub 4 worsh
but tru worsh is always express in loving servic

SCRIPT: EX 34:1-8; SERM: "HOW CLOSE?"
 (ILLUS BOY IN CHURCH, BEDTIME PRAYR & WISH G HAD BIN THER)
 (UNLIK BOY, ISITES, & PARTIC MOSES KNU G IN THER MIDST
 (BACKGROUND ON SCRIP VSS 1-3)
 VS 4-MOSES OBSEYS
 VS 5 APPEARS & PROCLAIMS HIS OWN NAME - NO DOUBT WHO HE IS
 VS 6 NAME MEANS = HE THAT IS, WHO HE IS IN ENGLISH
 THEN SPELLS OUT WAT HE DUZ 4MANK
 VS 7-MOSES MADE 2KNC ALTHO ISITES, ALL PEOPL SINNRS, G 4GIVS
 (EXPL END VS 7 SIN VISIT ON CHILDREN - THOZ WHO HATE G)
 VS 8-MOTIC WAT MOSES DIO - HE WORSHIPEO
 TH/NAME OF G SHUD INSPIR US ZWORSHIP HIM
 MOSES AS CLOS 2 GOD AS CUD GET
 MUS WE B THAT CLOS 2 WORSHIP??
 WAT SHUD INSPIR US? JUST HIS NAME
 HOW DO WE EXPRES TRU WORSHIP??
 (ILLUS FREDERICK FABER - WROTE FAITH OUR FATHERS)
 HOW CLOSE R WE? U EVR SIT & THINK OF THAT NAME??
 HOW DO WE COMPAR OUR RELATSHIP W/GOD?
 (ILLUS OF FAIRNESS OF THINGS)
 JUST WAT IS OUR FAITHFULNES 2GOO & TH/THINGS OF GOD??
 (ILLUS OF GRANDDAUGHTER & VBS SEVERAL YRS AGO)
 HOW CLOSE ARE WE TO GOD??
 (ILLUS PREACHER FRANCOIS FENELON & KING LOUIS XIV OF FRANCE)
 OUR PRIMARY REASON FOR WORSHIP IS NOT:
 WHO WILL BE THERE,
 WHERE IT IS HELD
 AND NEVER UNDER COMPELSION "I HAVE TO WORSHIP"
 GOD WANTS OUR LOVE, OUR DEVOTION, OUR WORSHIP
 OUR WORSHIP DETERMINES HOW WE SERV
 WORSHIP IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR SERVICE,
 NOW IS SERVICE A SUBSTITUTE FOR WORSHIP
 BUT TRUE WORSHIP IS ALWAYS EXPRESSED IN LOVING SERVICE

"How Close?"
 Scripture: Exodus 34:5-8
 (illus littl boy & believin G wasn't in Church that day)
 "Now unlike that little boy, I see? Mos in partic knu G t'er midst
 or went up Mt 2nd tim w/2nu stoms reep 4 G engrav on them
 Then Mos ascend Mt res =Vs 5
 "I saw Zham in cloud & spok 2 Mos & we read His presence=Vs 6-7
 look & identify self as HE THAT IS WHO HE IS
 He identif self as TH/GRAT I AM
 afer he duz this He spok wat d6z 4mank
 This stamen lt Mos knu evn tht he & Isites wer misrbl sinrns,in
 site of G, yet, G wil/duz 4priv & hav cov relathip w/Him
 at reactin of Mos - Vs 8
 Mos sa clos 2? he knu that 2? in that positin requir worsh
 2 Him
 at this pt, Mos no ask anyth of G
 "he in His presenc & that alrn worthy of worsh
 Mos bin thru all expers of talk 2 G, & get instruc 2lead Isites
 But now G reveal self thru His Name
 jus very name of G shud inspir us Zbow B4 Him
 TH/LORD GOD IF HE THAT IS WHO HE IS
 men try convy thots or wors/reverenc, but not ?many seem hit tru
 idea of worsh
 Frederick Faber - wrot Faith our Fathrs & wrot otrs
 (Illus 2 parts of his wrtings)
 How Clos R we? God?
 do U evr jus sit & t-think of Him?
 do U evr say that nam ovr & ovr, savor richnes of G Th/Father??
 wat do we G as our relathip w/G?
 someone wrot list quest cp individ Xpian 2othr areas of lif
 (Illus t is list)
 "is our faithfulness??
 (Sampls-granddctr, & girl enthus & VBS)
 How excited F we bout Ch & worship?
 Did we lk toward Zcum here this morn?
 I kno sum who didnt simpl Bcuz seem Bliev cant wors G unles
 insid bldg
 but we P here, & I true Ur enthus is such U wil kno this morn
 I wer at wors evn tho the it out of doors
 How Clos R we? God? How Clos is God Pus?
 deren on perspectiv bout wors
 (Illus preach Francois Fenelon & King Louis XIV of France)
 our primary reason 4 wors shud not B determ wher wors held;nor
 shud it R Bcuz who ther; shudn't R undr comulsin
 we shud always wors Bcuz that derir our harts
 & shud want wors whthr ch emoty or ful - How Close?
 Only as clos as we permit selvs 2drew near 2 God
 how we wors determ how we serv - wors no sub 4 servic, nor is
 serv sub 4 wors - but tru wors is alway expres in luvin servic

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
Ethan and Alica in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Married: December 15, 1951

Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill

Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Diety of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.